

# The English Magazine

*Auspicium melioris ævi*

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## "The End of the History of Ideas"

THERE are many things one may think about the collapse of Bolshevism; some optimistic, some rather the reverse. The least heart-warming aspect of the matter is the feeling that almost the whole world—or rather, almost all the powers and principalities of the world, governmental and otherwise—are now united by a single ideology: an ideology of such soul-deadening banality and shallowness and such suffocating self-complacency and parochialism that it threatens—and more, than threatens—to turn the world into a "global village" in the worst possible sense of that term: a vast, inhuman conglomerate with all the intellectual disadvantages of village life (small-mindedness, inability to understand things beyond its own limited horizons, unintelligence, and, beneath its official "pluralism", a narrow, self-righteous intolerance for all things which do not belong to the parish of liberal democracy) with none of its compensating advantages of intimacy, familiarity, tradition or friendliness. "Small is beautiful" is a rather grooshy catch-phrase which has some truth in it; but the brave new post-cold-war world seems intent upon combining all the vices of bigness with all the vices of smallness.

Perhaps the most explicit "official" expression to date of this ghastly new parochialism is contained in a statement made by a spokesman for the American State Department at the time of the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. According to this functionary, the world has now reached "the end of the history of ideas" because from now on "liberal democracy will be the universal, dominant, unchallengeable and irreplaceable ideology all over the world for all eternity." I suspect that even those who view liberal democracy with the usual complacency may find something rather chilling in this. It is little wonder that its functionaries do not often lapse into such grandiose statements. Apart from anything else, it somehow shows up the pettiness of the thing when it is placed alongside phrases like "for all eternity". It sounds rather disproportionate. Are mass-culture and pop-capitalism really the ultimate goals of human striving? Is the present social order really of such a nature that it is fit to be

"universal, dominant, unchallengeable and irreplaceable . . . all over the world for all eternity?" And in the apotheosis of Coca-Cola civilisation, have we really found the consummation of man's age-long quest and reached the end of the history of ideas? Put so plainly, we doubt whether many people would really think so; and yet, *not* put plainly, but hinted at, implied, assumed, this postulate forms the basis of most of the things that are happening in the world today. George Orwell said: "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—for ever". He had in mind the Inevitable Triumph of Socialism: the dark god which has so signally failed, but which in 1948, when the words were written, seemed the unavoidable fate of humanity. Today that fate might be summed up differently. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a lout chewing a hamburger to the tune of anarchic rock music—for ever; or imagine a sub-cockney marketing executive in a repulsively-designed metallic-gold motor car speeding down an endless motorway—"for all eternity". The boot has gone, and we should be thankful for that—and yet the boot remains; as this endless, superficial materialism, which satisfies nothing but the shallowest surface of the soul, becomes increasingly violent and ugly by a sort of internal reaction.

That is the literal boot. The metaphorical boot is perhaps heavier than ever. The crushing of real dissent (though, of course, a hundred approved dissents, sanctified protests and media-sanctioned pseudo-rebellions are permitted and indeed encouraged), the crushing of real thought, "the end of the history of ideas", is enforced with a thoroughness and a far-reaching subtlety which no mere heavy-handed tyranny could possibly have aspired to.

But is this really the fate of humanity, any more than was the Inevitable Triumph of Socialism? Can the philosophy (or rather, the mysosophy) of money-grubbing really replace all the ideas and aspirations of humankind; is it our fate to live forever by bread alone, or rather, by bread and circuses? It seems so now, with a dull, empty sort of inevitability; not the dreadful ineluctable inevitability which

characterised the unstoppable Advance of Socialism, but the inevitability of a world which knows no alternative. Well, we have seen what happened to the far stronger and surer inevitability of Socialism. We shall see what happens to this one.

A leader in *The Spectator*, also commenting on the unification of Germany, spoke of a unification based upon the common pursuit of money and commented that when one considers the damage wrought by the pursuit of over-arching ideas in Germany up until the fall of Marxism, perhaps the pursuit of money was not such a bad unifying force after all. This seems to us a typical case of the perversions of modernism justifying yet further perversions. Because the "over-arching ideas" of the 20th century have been ignorant, materialistic, and founded upon falsehood and upon rebellion against divine law and traditional norms—and have therefore led to tyranny;—perhaps we should take yet a further step toward unintelligence and abandon ideas altogether. Again, and from a less expected source, we have the doctrine of "the end of the history of ideas".

Yet we do not think the history of ideas is quite so easily ended. Socialism was the last real "idea" to wield real power in the world. We have now entered a period of utilitarianism and what is vulgarly termed "pragmatism". Fundamental loyalties,—national identity itself,—must be cast aside in the pursuit of mere economics, of mere efficiency (but what are efficiency and economics if they are not means to some end?). Race and nation, caste and nobility, sanctity and honour; all these things, we are constantly reminded, can have no place in the future unless a cash value can be put upon them. From now on there will be no ideas, there will only be money; money and "entertainment". That, we are told, is Realism. That is the Voice of the Future.

For our part, we remember the previous Voice of the Future: the one that came down with the Berlin Wall. We remember how very inevitable it seemed and how it vanished overnight. We think of the bland, mind-bleached stripped-pine surface of the New Europe and we think that Socialism, dead as it is, is rather more convincing, even now.

Whatever comes next, in the new century—and we do not profess to know—the present régime is no more than an interregnum; a vacancy; an ebb between two tides. For one thing is certain: man cannot live long without ideas.

NO FOREIGN RULERS!  
INSIST ON IMPERIAL

### Words

## Is English Changing?

Miss Caroline Scott-Robinson Thinks Not

It is a natural tendency to assume that our language is changing and changing for the worse. If it is changing it is certainly changing for the worse, since the whole tendency of modern prose, as opposed to that, say, of a hundred years ago is toward the sloppy, hasty, sloganised expression of the "mass-media". The spoken word has, among educated people, become a blunter and less elegant medium of expression than perhaps it has ever been before—to the point where ideas that are not expressed by cheap, pre-packaged catch-phrases are rarely expressed at all, and when expressed not understood by those who have virtually lost the art of listening to a whole sentence of real English. In pronunciation, the tendency to adopt the ugly vowels of the lowest and least educated classes is gradually eating away at the speech of all other classes so that, all other things being equal, one may say that the younger a speaker is, the worse his diction will be (though some say that this has recently begun to change).

The position of affairs has been admirably described by Mr. Eric Partridge, one of the foremost authorities on modern English, in a 1965 addendum to his classic *Usage and Abusage* commenting upon what he calls "the aggrandisement of mediocrity" in English since the Second World War:

... the speech of an illiterate is [considered] preferable to that of an educated, cultured person. Subtlety and suppleness, distinctions and variety, eloquence and ease, clarity of phrasing and perspicuity of sentence, all these are suspect, for they imply superiority of mind and spirit.... No wonder mediocrity flourishes in literature and, indeed, at all levels of writing, for its only vehicle, language, has been slowed down by the slow-minded and the sluggish-hearted, by the dull and the indifferent. Any one who believes in civilisation must find it difficult to approve, and impossible to abet, one of the surest means of destroying it. To degrade language is finally to degrade civilisation.

Mr. Partridge is well aware that such devastation of language is not an isolated phenomenon, but one which proceeds, as he points out, from a society for which "... Bedlam is as musical as Bach or Beethoven; a daub indicates genius; a dead level of uninspired and almost

formless monotony, and the I.Q. of an idiot are superior to a controlled imagination and a high intelligence."

There is a strong inclination to believe that changes which are taking place and becoming very widespread are permanent shifts in the form of the language. This is particularly so, since every one who writes these days about the history of language (or indeed the history of anything else) does so from the point of view that *change* or *evolution* is its most salient characteristic. The obsession with change and evolution is part of the modernist ideology. Indeed, it is its cardinal characteristic. The modern world thinks as it does and is what it is because it believes that nothing is absolute and eternal, that everything is in a continual state of flux (in Platonic terms, it believes that the world of becoming is all in all and does not understand that becoming has its roots in the transcendent world of Being). Everything that is characteristically modern—in music, art, politics, clothes, speech, or anything else in life, is based upon the statement that there is no ultimate truth—equality and democracy, for example, are based on the belief that no person or class of people is nobler, finer, better—nearer to the ultimate—than any other. Modern music and art are the worship of the chaotic centreless void. All things are changing. Nothing is real and ultimate and true.

In fact, as an historical statement, this is very far from being the truth. Like all heresies, it has an element of truth in it. Things *do* change. However, it is a perverse misreading of history to believe that things are in a constant state of flux or evolution. The major changes of history are variations upon ancient and eternal themes. The philosophies of the great schools and nations are restatements in different cultural "languages" of the same primordial truths. Even the phenomenon of the civilisation which breaks away from the primordial theme and plunges itself into cynical chaos is not new. It has happened before and will happen again. The decadence of Rome was very similar to the modern world. The decadent civilisation is a recurring hiccup in the course of history. Some would say that it is a phase in the life of every civilisation—its senility, as it were—but that all but the most powerful civilisations tend to be killed off by external forces before they reach that stage.

The minor changes that take place all the time are like changes of weather: impermanent and of no particular significance. They no more prove that there is no underlying and definite form to things than the changes in the English

weather prove that England has no definite climate. England has a very definite climate, quite different from that of Egypt or Spain or Iceland. The changes are part of that climate.

All these notions are reflected in the study of the English language. The modernist dogma is that: "there is no such thing as a pure, definitive English language. So-called 'Standard English' is just one dialect among others, no better than, say, Cockney or the pidgin English of some Caribbean island. It is, in any case, constantly changing, so it is impossible to say what is good or correct English and what is not." It may seem rather remarkable that this is said and (presumably) believed by the modern equivalent of intelligent people, but it is. Any one who thinks that Caribbean pidgin or Cockney are not sub-standard compared to the English of Jane Austen or Matthew Arnold is, of course, simply not worth the trouble and boredom of talking to (they may not be sub-standard compared with the sub-journalese cant of a television "chat-show" or a modern middle-class dinner party, but that is another matter).

The assertion that English is constantly changing is, perhaps, worthy of more serious consideration. English *does* change, but it changes very slowly and in accordance with certain laws which govern its inner being. The notion that it is "in a constant state of flux" and that "we cannot tell what is real, correct English" is as absurd as saying that the changes which take place in John Smith over the years show that "we cannot tell who is the real John Smith". All things change, but the changes take place around a central core of identity. Only the most perverse eye can see them as indicating a chaotic flux in which there is no permanence and no truth.

At the moment, of course, since the doctrine of flux is dominant in all areas of life, English appears to be changing more than ever. Every absurd coinage, be it political cant ("racism", "sexism"), journalese ("ongoing", "lifestyle") or whatever it may be, is eagerly taken up by what are called the "chattering classes", used as if it were a genuine word, and introduced into the speech of the indiscriminating masses through their talking machines. The degeneration is encouraged by schools which refuse to teach Standard English because it is no "better" (dreadful word!) than the argot of the slums of Kingston, Jamaica or the Gorbals.

No one can read a newspaper or talk to a native of any class without receiving proof that modern English is degenerating, which, in turn, the proponent of the "perpetual flux"

theory would take as proof of his thesis.

Yet we would cast doubt on the entire statement that English is *changing*. Changes are taking place, certainly, but what reason have we to suppose that they will be permanent? English is a very robust language. Much is made of the fact that it has absorbed many changes, but the fact is that it has rejected many more. It is particularly prone to reject the floods of changes that are foisted upon it in times of modish silliness.

In evidence let us call an essay written by Jonathan Swift in 1710 entitled "The Continual Corruption of our English Tongue". In it he reproduces a letter received by him that year which is as full of the cant of the time as is the conversation of a modern polytechnic lecturer:

"SIR,

I cou'dn't get the Things you sent for all about Town—I tho't to ha' come down myself and then I'd h' brot 'um; but I ha'n't don't and I believe I can't do't, that's Pozz—Tom begins to gi'mself airs because he's going with the Plenipo's—'tis said the French King will bamboozl'us agen which causes many Speculations. The Jacks and others of that Kidney are very uppish and alert upon't as you may see by their Phizz's—Will Hazzard has got the Hipps, having loſt to the tune of Five Hundred Pound, tho he understands Play very well, no body better. He has promis't me upon 'Rep to leave off Play; but you know 'tis a Weakness he's too apt to give into, tho he has as much wit as any man, no body more. He has lain incog ever since—the Mobb's very quiet with us now—I believe you tho't I banter'd you in my laſt like a Country Put—I sha'n't leave Town this Month, &c."

Swift comments upon this as follows:

"This Letter is in every Point an admirable Pattern of the present polite Way of Writing, nor is it of less Authority for being an Epiſtle: You may gather every Flower in it, with a Thousand more of equal Sweetness, from the Books, Pamphlets and single Papers offered us every Day in the Coffee Houses: And these are the Beauties introduced to supply the Want of Wit, Sense, Humour and Learning, which formerly were looked upon as Qualifications for a Writer."

Two things impress us about these passages. The first is the striking parallel to the present day—the puerile slang and worthless neologisms used without the least embarrassment by intelligent writers and speakers "to supply the want" as Swift so neatly and accurately puts it "of wit, sense, humour and learning". The second thing to strike us is the

transience of the phenomenon. Swift was afraid that it represented a radical degeneration of the language, but almost all the cant in the letter is vanished today, while the English of his comments upon it is very little different from that used by you and me. *Mobb* (now *mob*, short for *mobile vulgus*: "the shifting or fickle crowd") is still with us, perhaps because pejorative words do not require the dignity of ordinary words. We still have *bamboozle*, but it is still only humorous; it has not attained the status of a "proper" word. *Banter* has passed into real English, but even this is a very "light" word. *To the tune* remains slang to this day, despite its serious usage in 1710. *Give in* is now proper, though informal, English, but this expression was not made up by the Coffee-House slickers who used it; it is an Irishism. *Hipps*, *pozz*, *rep*, *phizz*, *plenipo*, *Jacks* and the rest are long forgotten (*rep*—for *reputation*—was used in vulgar American a few decades ago, but this was not a survival of the 18th century usage but a separate occurrence of a rather obvious shortening).

The ubiquitous elisions (*I'd*, *can't* and the rest) have been with us in speech since long before the early 18th century, with different degrees of acceptance in polite speech at different times. Swift's complaint is, presumably, about their use in writing and here again, the craze was short-lived. After a short while the *status quo ante* was resumed, in which such elisions appeared only in dialogue. No writer would address them directly to his reader and, indeed, even those elisions which Swift does accept, such as *'tis* and *promis't*, became inadmissible in formal writing, perhaps in reaction against the informality of Swift's time. One is strongly reminded of similar reactions of present-day Romantics, who, for example, use Christian names less freely than their great-grandparents in reaction against the modern Americanising over-use of them. It is true, of course, that *shan't*, *I'd* etc. have recently returned to modern "formal" writing, and very ungainly they look, too. Miss P.D. James, in the midst of an eloquent defence in a newspaper article of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer against the flat modern language of the new versions, paraphrases a Biblical passage thus: "... we read that God wasn't in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. . .". That the elision *wasn't* is used in such a context, where it sounds so inappropriately casual and even irreverent, by a writer who is very far, in general, from being insensitive to language or to reverence, shows what a deeply ingrained

habit this "writing down" has become among modern professional writers. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose that this fad, expressive today of much the same attitudes that it expressed in the 18th century, will be of any greater duration than it was the last time.

It is a curious circumstance that more than one of the supporters of the "perpetual flux" theory of language has cited Swift's unsuccessful opposition to the word *mob* as an example of the inevitable triumph of change, while failing to note that the vast majority of the words which he opposed are long since dead and buried. The highly selective use of evidence—often entirely unconscious, because his passively ingrained prejudices lead the modernist to see only what he expects to see—is an important element in most modernist arguments. Change in the English language is, in fact, slow, cautious and always preserves the fundamental root intact. The success of any given change is very much the exception rather than the rule.

The current neologisms seem to be of two kinds—those whose *raison d'être* is their characteristically modern style or manner of expression and those which express some new concept or shade of meaning. The two are not wholly separable because a new shade of meaning, or indeed a new concept, may be no more than a passing mannerism. The word *macho*, for example, is a word which expresses an essentially Latin phenomenon and which has been adopted into English cant via American cant as a largely derogatory term only loosely connected with the Mexican-Spanish original but closely connected with the current craze for disapproval of all sexual differentiation.

Terms like *life style*, *the bottom line*, *hike* (meaning *raise*) all express things for which normal English has perfectly adequate words. The claim that they have greater brevity or convenience does not explain their use; *life style* may be briefer than its English equivalents such as *mode of life*, but *the bottom line* is much more cumbersome than the more normal *gist* or *conclusion*, while the hordes of redundant prepositions which have invaded the language serve only to make it more wordy and cumbersome—*miss out on* instead of *miss*; *lose out* instead of *lose* etc. They are used because they impart a particular tone of transatlantic slickness to what is being said. It might be contended that this tone will be lost as the words pass into normal English, but I very much doubt it. *To the tune of* was a slangy expression nearly 300 years ago and still has the same tone of slanginess today. We suspect

that few such neologisms will be remembered in fifty years from now, except, perhaps, as quaint period pieces.

Another example of the way in which modern expressions make the language more rather than less wordy and inefficient is in the countless pseudo-technical puff-words with which the petty intelligentsia inflate their discourse,—so that it is not uncommon to hear dreadful people speak of children being in a *playground situation* (or *sitcheevation* as they pronounce it) when they mean simply in a *playground*; or of something being done on a *daily basis* when they mean merely that it is done *daily*.

Words which describe new technical processes will probably survive if the processes do, but words introduced to express current prejudices are unlikely to last beyond the prejudices themselves. *Racist* and *sexist*, for example, are thought-police words which make certain dogmatic assumptions about human life and are used to stigmatise all who transgress against the dogmas concerned. We cannot imagine either the dogmas or the words having any great duration and would expect them, in far less than a century, to sound as obscure as the Protestant thought-police word *Romaniser* does today.

A more serious concern about permanent change in the language is occasioned by the increasing sloppiness and inaccuracy of its use and the fact that teachers, lexicographers, the B.B.C. and others who have, in the past, been guardians of correctness are now infected with the modernist doctrine that anything is as "right" as anything else and refuse to make a stand for proper usage. We cannot entirely discount this fear, but we would point out that, when one reads a book like *Usage and Abuse*, one finds numerous errors and abuses which were current in the 1930s and '40s and notes with interest that very few of them are still current today. No one today says *something of that extent* to mean *something of that sort*, or uses *flaunt* for *flout*; though both these errors and many others which have disappeared were common before the last great war. Standard English is much more robust than we are apt to give it credit for. Weeds sprout abundantly and die within a generation: the real language continues with surprisingly little change.

In pronunciation, changes which are seen as tendencies which allow prediction of the future shape of the language are frequently nothing of the sort. For example, in 1938, writing in *The World of Words*, Mr. Partridge noted a tendency to convert the *u* sound, as in *tune* or

duty to a simple oo—a form common in America and rapidly gaining ground among the lower classes in England. He suggested that this pronunciation was likely to become universal in years to come. Today, however, very few English speakers of any class say dooty. The corrupt or slovenly pronunciation is now jeety (curiously, this new corruption—the thinning oo of loose-mouthed sub-cockney—is causing movement in precisely the opposite direction to that which seemed to be the prevailing trend in the '30s, with many partially-corrupt speakers saying tyoo or teeoo for too). This is at least as ugly and ignorant-sounding and affects a wider range of words, since the corruption of oo toward ee affects all oo words: but it indicates that entrenched tendencies can rapidly vanish rather than grow, and shows that however much ground is being gained for yeeth and byeety today, the whole nasty corruption is likely to be forgotten tomorrow.

I do not contend that English is in no danger. If our national life and culture continue to degenerate as they have done over the past half-century, then the language will doubtless continue to degenerate with them, but I rather doubt whether this will happen, even though the forces of darkness still occupy every position of power. If there should be, as I feel there must be, a return to the norms of civilised life; then I think we will find that the English language will reassert herself with a vigour and an innate conservatism which may well give rise to a renaissance of English letters.

English cannot be other than mediocre when it is given no task to do that is not mediocre. In the hands of a generation of vulgarians it can be made to appear vulgar; but the petty "changes" which have been wrought upon post-war English are less than skin-deep. Give her men worthy to wield her and a people with ears to hear and she will shrug off the decades of slogans and jingles, the pseudo-technicalia and the transatlantic cackle, as easily as Gulliver shrugged off the Lilliputian ropes.

*A brown and white terrier at St. Helier, Jersey, has acquired the habit of catching one of the morning trains from St. Helier to Corbière, remaining there for the day and joining the evening train back. It travels quite independently, but occasionally attaches itself to excursion parties.*

*The dog strenuously avoids the station officials, and if they succeed in ejecting it from one train, it catches the next. Frequently it meets the English morning boat, has been known to attend race meetings, and once strayed onto the course and held up a race.* NEWSPAPER REPORT 1925

### The Counties

## Why Our Shires Matter

by Father Francis

### of the Motherhood of Our Lady

THIS article is an edited extract from the author's *The Strange Case of the Counties That Didn't Change*. Unlike the remainder of the book, which is an objective statement of the proof that only local government has changed, and not the historic Counties, it expresses a personal opinion, although one for which there is ample support.

### 1. Unappreciated Heritage

"What value can be served in keeping outmoded names?" Letter, *The Times*, 30th May 1973.

"The basic cultural unit; the primary focus of loyalty", "A Role for the English Shires", *The Regionalist* no. 4, 1984, page 13.

As was commented in 1959, when earlier local government changes were in the air, there are "two opposed views of time". For one "anything which is old is bound... to be out of date"; for the other, "things which are ancient have a value which time and tradition has made doubly precious".<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not it was good that local government change in the 1960s and 1970s broke the link between administration and the Counties may be a matter of opinion. That most people have been so willing to believe the change meant the Counties no longer exist is without doubt as bad and harmful as it is unhistorical and incorrect.

The Counties are more ancient than the language we speak. A thousand years old and often based on far older kingdoms and tribes, they go back to the dawn of our history; as the root of that history they are the stable identity needed in a time of change. Yet they have been cast aside. The sale of a mediæval map is described as "cultural vandalism", and "a tragedy for our national heritage" but the effective destruction of thousand-year-old Counties is ignored. Ancient cathedrals would not be demolished because they were no longer needed for worship, but the Counties, even older, are considered no more than an "administrative convenience" to be abandoned when new areas are created.

Even most of those who claim to be concerned with our heritage fail to see what a major part the Counties are of that heritage.

To the National Trust they simply do not exist; the Ordnance Survey advertises its maps as a means to "discover hidden treasures", and shows "historical regions", but ensures the most historic of regions cannot be discovered because to it the Counties are no more than "clutter", and as such are omitted.<sup>2</sup>

There are purely practical objections to using only the new local government counties. Especially important are the difficulties caused for historical continuity by misleading changes in what should be the major stable points of reference, especially, as the then General Editor of the *Victoria County History* pointed out in 1973, with "periodical reviews [areas and names] may last little more than 15 years":<sup>3</sup> a "vast corpus of topographical and other literature is based on the traditional County boundaries",<sup>4</sup> and everything from tracing ancestors and collecting old view cards to historical research will be made harder.

But the real reasons for refusing to accept the myth that the Counties have gone are far deeper.

### 2. Loss of Roots

"A nation which has forgotten its past can have no future." Sir Winston Churchill.

If the past—and the Counties are the oldest and most widespread living embodiments of that past—was no more than a memory its loss might not matter; it is because it is far more that those who seek change have such a "particular hatred of rooted things".<sup>5</sup>

The Royal Commission of 1960 commented that to "preserve the buildings of the past" was "not mere sentimentality. . . To destroy or obscure these monuments of the past would be to undermine the foundations of the present."<sup>6</sup> Sadly, although it is now being appreciated that our heritage in general has a deep value, this does not often extend to the Counties. Whilst it would be easy to fill a book with quotations of statements to the effect that—"modern society [is] cut adrift from its roots. A rootless society becomes anarchic and social disorder follows. We need to restore history to its proper place",<sup>7</sup> it would be hard to fill even a paragraph with such sentiments referring to the Counties.

Yet, after forty years of steady destruction of the human dimension, people more than ever need the security of their place in time and in space; instead they have been cut off from their past and their present has become confused: "when the anchors of institutions begin to be loosened, the supports which they

provide of the personal identity, for the self, begin to loosen too".<sup>8</sup>

The "shattering disorientation [induced by] too much change" to which Mr. Alvin Toffler<sup>9</sup> gave the name "future shock" has come about because "all the old roots—religion, nation, community, family or profession—are shaking under the hurricane impact of the accelerative thrust"; there is a "feeling that we live, rootless and uncertain, amid shifting dunes".

Although local differences based on history are seen as irrelevant, "snobbery", or a barrier to current ideals, as "psychological unification of the planet"<sup>10</sup> brings ever-greater uniformity, they are even more important. People may now be at home anywhere, but increasingly they have no home.

The Counties are the deepest of local identities. The new local government counties, which have no history of their own, and with which large numbers of people will always find it impossible to identify—not only because they appear to conflict with the historic Counties, but also because of their association with particular political policies, can be no substitute.

### 3. Past and Future

"What shall we drink to? To the future?"

"To the past," said Winston.

"The past is more important," agreed O'Brien.  
George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

"LOYALTY to the historic Counties is not only a precious link with the past. . . it is a defence against the increasing manipulation of reality... The first stage in brainwashing is to wipe out the past and to create insecurity. . . To allow government to become more important than historical identity... is to encourage the attitude which is behind the re-writing of history."<sup>11</sup>

Four decades ago it was noted that a "common factor is the appearance of plans everywhere designed to make people forget their historical attachments".<sup>12</sup> As Stravinsky pointed out in *The Poetics of Music*, "a real tradition is not the relic of a past that is irretrievably gone; it is a living force that animates and informs the present"; destruction of the past cannot be taken lightly, for the "suppression of history... is the suppression of the society's own past".<sup>13</sup>

Changing the meaning of the word "County", so that it no longer has the primary meaning of a fixed area untouched by creation or change in temporary administrative boundaries, is part of the making of a present which owes nothing to the past. (A process which the

policy of dictionaries, giving "currency" priority over "correctness", intentionally encourages.<sup>14</sup>) It has rightly been asked whether we "may... make our words mean whatever we choose them to mean", for "we have an obligation to past usage... In one sense words are our masters, or communication would be impossible".<sup>15</sup> But like the "Newspeak" of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a political language "designed to make lies sound truthful",<sup>16</sup> the purpose of changing language is to stop accurate communication.

The oldest and most widespread links with the past have been reduced to no more than changeable administrative areas rooted solely in the present, dependent solely upon government; to accept this is not only to lose the past, but also to surrender the present: "objective truth and the immutability of the past" cannot be separated.<sup>17</sup> Orwell saw this very clearly when he wrote that he "who controls the past controls the future"; expanding the message of a talk given seven years earlier, that totalitarianism "isolates you from the outside world, it shuts you up in an artificial universe in which you have no standards of comparison",<sup>18</sup> his *Nineteen Eighty-Four* showed a world in which "nothing exists except an endless present", "a self-contained universe, in which two and two could make five if the Leader chose to say so."

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 21st March 1959.
- <sup>2</sup> Ordnance Survey, 22nd January 1985.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 19th May 1973.
- <sup>4</sup> A. Clifton-Taylor, *The Times*, 22nd May 1973.
- <sup>5</sup> *Liverpool Newsletter*, July-August 1986.
- <sup>6</sup> Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, 1960, Paragraph 7ff.
- <sup>7</sup> R. Parsons, *Royal Stuart Society Papers XXVIII*, 1986 35.
- <sup>8</sup> Schon, Reith Lectures, 1979.
- <sup>9</sup> A. Toffler, *Future Shock*, 1970.
- <sup>10</sup> P. Lewis, *The Fifties*, 1978, page 233.
- <sup>11</sup> R.O.O.T.S. "Challenge" 1986.
- <sup>12</sup> C.H. Douglas, *The Big Idea*, 1942, page 27.
- <sup>13</sup> H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, 1968, p. 86.
- <sup>14</sup> See the section on dictionaries in *The Strange Case of the Counties that Didn't Change*.
- <sup>15</sup> R.W. Holmes, "The Philosopher's Alice in Wonderland", *Antioch Review*, Summer 1959.
- <sup>16</sup> G. Orwell, "Politics and the English Language", *Horizon*, April 1946.
- <sup>17</sup> A.N. Wilson, *Daily Mail*, 16th March 1988.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Listener*, 19th June 1941.

*The Strange Case of the Counties that Didn't Change* is available at £6-0s-0d post free from

R.O.O.T.S. Heritage County Conservation, 48. Shalmarsh Road, Higher Bebington, Wirral, Cheshire.

#### Film Star Interview

### Jeanette MacDonald

"It's almost the most important thing in a girl's life," Jeanette MacDonald told me, "and it's every girl's duty to look her best on every occasion, to be well-groomed and to make the best of her good points and try to cover up the bad ones."

I was walking across the Studio with Miss MacDonald and as the sun shone on her bare head it brought out all the lights in her red-blond hair. I noticed her lovely skin, her well-groomed appearance, her general air of healthy exuberance and I said to myself: "Why shouldn't she be lovely? She has money, maids, everything done for her. What does she know about the beauty problem of the average girl?" Aloud I said: "What advice would you give the girl who hasn't all your opportunities?"

"I'd suggest going on a beauty budget," she said. "The very first day of the year every girl should sit right down in front of the mirror and honestly take stock of her appearance—her clothes, her hair, her face, every phase of her personal appearance. And then plan her campaign to make the most of every advantage she possesses."

"Many girls fail to give their hair proper attention," Miss MacDonald told me as I lingered in the studio while she ate her light tray luncheon.

Miss MacDonald has the loveliest hair. When you are talking to her you can't keep your eyes from wandering to it.

"Light hair like mine," she told me, "has to be washed more often than dark hair to photograph and look well."

"Sometimes in the middle of a picture it is impossible to get a shampoo, so I dry clean it. I take a thin layer of absorbent cotton and push it well down into my hair brush and give my hair a good brushing."

"I keep my nails pliable and the cuticle healthy by putting liquid vaseline and cream on them and going to bed wearing a pair of white cotton gloves two or three nights a week."

"When I was making a small salary I always managed to have one good-looking outfit. If I had to make my choice now I would prefer one really smart outfit to ten ordinary ones. Accessories are my passion. They make

or ruin an outfit in my opinion. And it's such fun to wear a new set of accessories with an old dress and have every one think you have a new outfit. The hat is most important, I think. When any one tells me I am looking particularly well, I always think to myself that it must be my hat.

"When you step out of a car your feet are the first thing any one sees. When you are walking away from any one, your feet are conspicuous, so it is important to have good-looking shoes and nice stockings. And I don't try to save money on stockings. I don't buy the sheepest ones because I think that is extra-

gant; but I buy good ones.

"In fact, I think the best of everything is the most economical in the end. I like the best of everything in my home, too. Years ago, before I could afford to buy many things, I chose a sterling silver pattern for my flat tableware. I told all my friends the name of the pattern and hoped for the best. Before I knew it, I had a complete set.

"I like to live well. I think every one should live as well as he can. I always have, but—and this is very important—I have always saved ten per cent. of my income first!"

*The New Movie Magazine, January 1934*

### Tales from Babylon by Sparrowhawk

SOME time ago, it would appear, the Visual Wireless Company mounted a production of a series of the late Mr. P.G. Wodehouse's incomparable Jeeves yarns. The actor who played Bertie Wooster was, it seems, the subject of some controversy. Some say that he played the part well, others that he was quite dreadful. Needless to say, I have never seen the series and so have no real right to an opinion (though I cannot suppress a shrewd guess merely from having seen a photograph of the chap concerned in a cutting I have received).

About this cutting. The actor was interviewed by a not-particularly-pleasant-seeming journalist who clearly idolised him. It was not a particularly interesting interview if one had not heard of the actor concerned (though it might have been even less interesting if one had) but one passage in particular aroused my curiosity.

"One of the most extraordinary criticisms of the series," said our fawning journalist "was that [Mr. —] has a suburban accent." Now, I am not in a position to know whether Mr. — has a suburban accent or not and I must confess that I am curious as to why the criticisms should have been considered so "extraordinary". Is it because Mr. — so clearly has not a suburban accent, or is it because although he has no one is supposed to dare to mention it even when he is playing a role for which such an accent renders him wholly unsuitable; in which, indeed, such an accent must entirely destroy the whole atmosphere of the production and render it pointless and painful. In short, is this declaration of "extraordinariness" predicated upon the axiom that we must all have, or pretend to have, tin

ears rather than risk offending against the sacred canons of democracy, equality and boredom?

This last suggestion is not as fanciful as it might seem. I am informed that period plays—especially those produced for children—frequently depict children of the better classes speaking with thin, sub-cockney accents of the sort which might be very aptly described as "suburban"—whether this is part of an attempt to eradicate any real idea of social distinction from the rising generation or merely due to the impossibility of engaging well-spoken child-actors in these days when the drama schools seem to make it a point of principle not to teach their children to speak properly I do not know.

Another possibility is that there is a policy of not "discriminating against" child actors merely because they have voices entirely inappropriate to the roles they are to play and have not sufficient thespian ability to do anything about the fact. Again, this may seem far-fetched, but the present writer has even heard of a policy termed "integrated casting" which means that non-white actors may be cast as kings of England, 18th-century squires or any other nonsensically impossible role. That this reduces the entire production to farce of the least enjoyable kind is of minor importance if of any importance at all. In the brave new world, we must learn to get away from the archaic notion that theatrical productions have any duty to please any audience; least of all the captive audience of television.

#### The Disgust of the Disgusting

ON one of my infrequent visits to one of our once-great cities, I saw a sign-board which read (whether alone or accompanied by some distasteful picture or low, punning head-line I cannot now recall) the words "Smoking is dangerous and disgusting. Stop it now." I was

informed that this was paid for, wholly or in part, by public money.

I do not myself smoke cigarettes, and have no particular love for the smoke of others' cigarettes, unless they are very good ones. Nor do I wish to enter into discussion of whether smoking is, in fact, dangerous, or whether, in any case, public authorities have any business spending your money and mine upon tendentious statements, vulgar and insulting slogans, and officious commands displayed in public places.

I would remark, in passing, that I have read in a cutting that illnesses caused by "Stress" (which is merely an euphemism for the cumulative effects of the general nastiness of modern living) account for an ever greater proportion of all illness and for a very large number of deaths—more than those which could in any way be related, in fact or in imagination, to smoking—and that the continual ingestion of the drug tobacco helps in many cases to reduce this "Stress".

If "Stress" is so dangerous, perhaps the natives will soon be admonished to avoid some of its causes—to stop working in dreadful modern offices; to stop poisoning their minds with the continual hypertrophic effluvia of the modern "mass media"; to stop stimulating the lowest and most animal part of the psyche with "rock" music; to stop going to places where soul-destroying modern architecture, hideous modern motor-cars, crude modern advertising and a hundred other things mount a continual assault upon all that is sane and decent within the soul.

Of course, such admonitions will never be made; for all these things are vital to the maintenance of the modern world in its present form. All attacks must be concentrated upon tobacco or alcohol, minor consolations which are still, so far, allowed to provide some small comfort to the poor creatures trapped in the chaotic labyrinth of mass-modernism.

But the single word which attracted my attention and my ire on that unpleasant sign-board was the word "disgusting". I am sometimes considered a little forceful and forthright in my manner of expression; certainly I have no inclination to mince my words where the manifold insanities of the modern world are concerned. Nonetheless "disgusting" is not a word I use either frequently or lightly; when I do use it, it is reserved for those things which genuinely evoke the feeling of disgust. There may be some people who feel like that about cigarettes, just as there are some who feel like that about cats or tripe; but to belab-

our people who, in common with many of the best-loved characters of fiction and of life, partake of tobacco with the word "disgusting" is not only grossly uncivil and quite disproportionate, but reveals a sense of perspective which I can only call genuinely mad.

There are many things in the modern world which are truly disgusting. The alley-cat morality which is accepted and encouraged by every public organ of communication; the destruction of the sanctity and security of the family; the vile thumpings and yowlings of pure mindless animality which are foisted upon those too weak-minded to know better as "music"; these things are genuinely disgusting. It would be a little uncharitable to say that the modernised man, at least in his more extreme form is disgusting, even though there are many of us in whom he evokes a feeling not far removed from disgust. It is certainly not unreasonable to say that the process which has converted so many of our fellows from the decent, ordinary, upright, moral beings which they would have been in normal times, to slouching, scowling, bizarrely-clad, lewd-minded grotesques, is a disgusting thing.

So many aspects of the modern world which are, one may presume, blandly accepted by the po-faced bureaucrats who order these sign-boards to be made, and the brittle-souled advertising men who make them, are genuinely and deeply disgusting to any sane and reasonable human being, that the application of the word to what, if it is a vice at all, must be the mildest and most venial vice in the catalogue, is a sign of a mind which, in any other time, would have taken its owner to Bedlam.

### The Self-Evident Swindle

LET US turn for a moment from the silliness of the present to the founding fathers of modern wrongheadedness. The sentiments may be no more pleasing but at least the prose is less likely to set our teeth on edge.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal. . ." When compared to the jargonised prattle of the modern politician, one is compelled to confess that these words of Thomas Jefferson have a certain ring.

One must also confess that for tactical genius and sheer audacity they stand almost alone.

There is an unparalleled wisdom in declaring the notion that all men are created equal to be self-evident. Certainly all external evidence would suggest the contrary. Men are not equal in height or in breadth, in the depth of their voices or the colour of their hair. They

## BLONDE BOMBHELL



Blonde Bombshell Comics, Presents St. Bride's, Burtonport, County Donegal.

## MISS WONDERFUL

ATTACKED BY THREE ROBOT DEATH-SHIPS AT THE VERY EDGE OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, MISS WONDERFUL IS ALARMED TO SEE A GIGANTIC BEHEMOTH OF SPACE SAIL INTO VIEW.

THAT HUGE SATELLITE—IT IS PAPSTAR, THE LARGEST OF ALL THE ILLEGAL TELEVISION SATELLITES. NO WONDER THESE SHIPS ARE ATTACKING ME. THEY PROBABLY THINK PAPSTAR IS UNDER A MISSILE ATTACK.

YEEP! HOW DID I GET UP HERE?

IN FACT, IT IS

ALL HAVE FAILED.

MOUNTING ONE OF THE ROBOT-SHIPS LIKE A GREAT IRON STEED THE CUTE CRUSADER ATTEMPTS TO TURN THE ENEMY'S WEAPON AGAINST HIM!

THE BLONDE BOMBHELL HURLS THE ROBOT-SHIP INTO OUTER SPACE ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH THE PIRATE SATELLITE. IT WAS DESIGNED TO PROTECT AND ACROSS THE WORLD A MILLION TELEVISION SCREENS BLACK OUT.

NO WONDER NO ONE CAN DESTROY THAT PIRATE SATELLITE! THE MISSILE WAS VAPOURISED INTO THIN AIR! AND I MAY BE NEXT IF I DO NOT MOVE QUICKLY!

I HAVE DISCOVERED THE ONE MISSILE WHICH CAN DESTROY PAPSTAR!

A HIGH-EXPLOSIVE MISSILE STREAKS TOWARD PAPSTAR. MANY GOVERNMENTS HAVE TRIED TO DESTROY THIS GIGANTIC PURVEYOR OF BOOTLEG BROADCASTS.

IF I CAN JUST TURN THIS SHIP SO THAT IT'S RAY-CANNON HITS THE OTHERS...

IT IS NOT WORKING! THE SHIP MUST BE PROGRAMMED NOT TO FIRE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE OTHER ROBOT-SHIPS OR THE SATELLITE—AND THEY ARE NOT FIRING AT ME EITHER!—WHICH GIVES ME AN IDEA.





AT THAT MOMENT IN AN ARMY CONTROL-ROOM-

WE'VE DONE IT WE'VE KNOCKED OUT PAPSTAR!

BEBOTHERED IF I KNOW HOW EVERY MISSILE WE'VE SENT HAS BEEN VAPOURISED.

LUCKY HIT I SUPPOSE

BUT WHAT'S THAT? AN OBJECT FALLING TOWARDS EARTH AT HIGH SPEED!



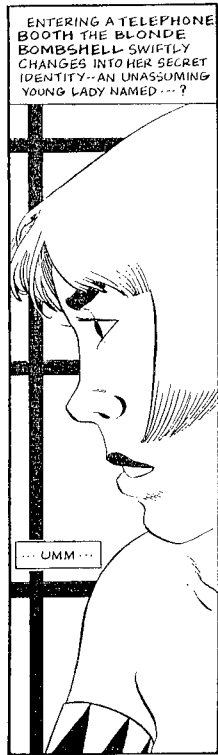
OH-HH...WHERE AM I?

GEE-NEE-US! THAT BEATS GETTING SQUISHED FLAT! I WISH I COULD DO IT!

JUST IN TIME! I DO NOT THINK I SHOULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT BIG BUMP! I MUST HAVE PASSED OUT--THE AIR WAS JOPLY THIN UP THERE. IN FACT, I STILL FEEL RATHER DIZZY, PERHAPS I SHOULD CHANGE BACK INTO MY NORMAL CLOTHES.

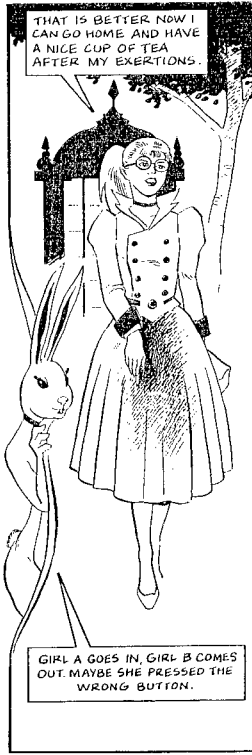
GOLLYWOGS! 100 FEET UP AND FALLING WHIZZILY!

I CAN'T LOOK!



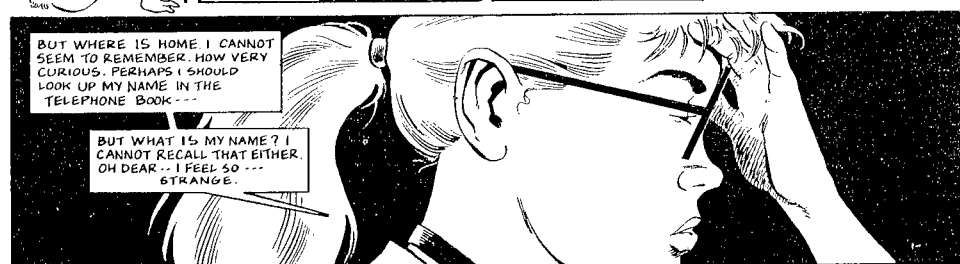
ENTERING A TELEPHONE BOOTH THE BLONDE BOMBSHELL SWIFTLY CHANGES INTO HER SECRET IDENTITY--AN UNASSUMING YOUNG LADY NAMED ---?

... UMM ...



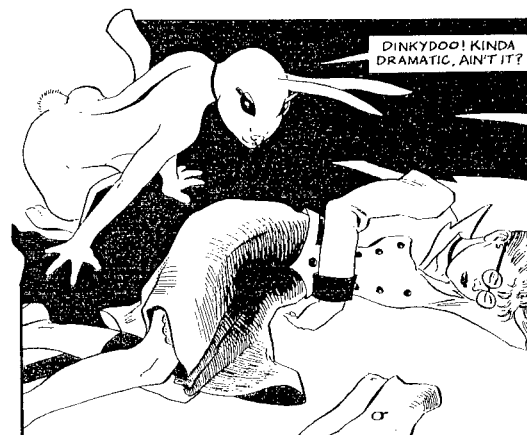
THAT IS BETTER NOW I CAN GO HOME AND HAVE A NICE CUP OF TEA AFTER MY EXERTIONS.

GIRL A GOES IN, GIRL B COMES OUT. MAYBE SHE PRESSED THE WRONG BUTTON.



BUT WHERE IS HOME I CANNOT SEEM TO REMEMBER. HOW VERY CURIOUS. PERHAPS I SHOULD LOOK UP MY NAME IN THE TELEPHONE BOOK---

BUT WHAT IS MY NAME? I CANNOT RECALL THAT EITHER. OH DEAR-- I FEEL SO ... STRANGE.



DINKYDOO! KINDA DRAMATIC, AIN'T IT?



OUR HEROINE AWAKES IN STRANGE SURROUNDINGS.

WHERE AM I?



DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF DUCKS YOU JUST PASSED CLEAN OUT IN THE STREET. WE BROUGHT YOU BACK HERE.

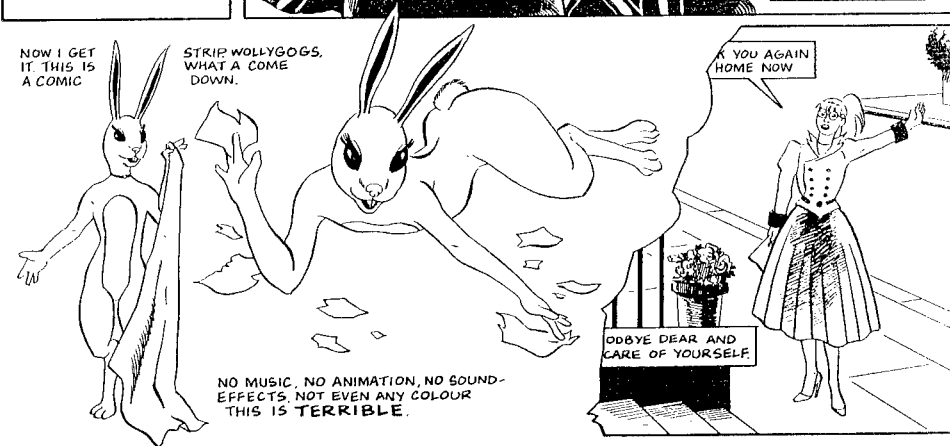


THANK YOU SO MUCH

DOESN'T SHE TALK NICELY? JUST LIKE THE GIRLS ON THE WIRELESS.

YES-- MUCH BETTER THAN THE AWFUL TYPES ON YOUR TELEVISION. I'M GLAD IT WENT BLANK.

I SAY WHAT IS THIS STUFF? TASTES LIKE COMIC-STRIP



NOW I GET IT THIS IS A COMIC

STRIP WOLLYGOGS, WHAT A COME DOWN.

A YOU AGAIN HOME NOW

ODDYE DEAR AND CARE OF YOURSELF.

NO MUSIC, NO ANIMATION, NO SOUND-EFFECTS. NOT EVEN ANY COLOUR THIS IS TERRIBLE.



are unequal in physical strength, in general intelligence, in the ability to learn a language, play a musical instrument or carve a piece of wood. They are born socially unequal, and wherever social inequalities are artificially removed by the force of egalitarian governments they spring up again immediately in new forms. It is almost impossible to find two men who are equal in any single respect. All these things are *evident*. They are supported by the evidence of our senses. So far as I know there is no single piece of evidence for the statement that all men are created equal. I should be interested to hear of even one.

What a master stroke, then, to declare that this notion is *self-evident*. That it requires no evidence outside itself. That it cannot be debated or argued because it is *self-evident*. At once it is taken out of the realm of ordinary assertions which must fend for themselves in the world of factual evidence. It is a special, protected case of *self-evidence*. It has to be, because it could not survive for five minutes if it ever ventured into the world of real evidence.

To say "we hold these truths to be self-evident" is to say "We refuse to discuss these conjectures with any one. We say they are true, so there! If you try to discuss them we shall call you rude names."

And this is the basis upon which all debate upon the subject of equality has been carried on ever since. It is taken as axiomatic by almost everybody that equality is  $\alpha$ ) possible and  $\beta$ ) desirable. How many people actually believe it I cannot imagine. It would take a better mind than mine—or at any rate one more resistant to boredom—to discover how far modern attitudes are shaped by stupidity and how far by cowardice. What is certain is that any one who should repudiate the dogmas of equality is met not with rational argument but with crass and insulting political jargon.

There can be good reasons for refusing to discuss one's case (other than the obvious and bad one that one's case is too weak to survive rational discussion). The most common is that the arguments are so old and have been gone over so many times that any one who is not convinced by them now will not be helped by a further rehearsal of them. Modern supporters of equality try to give the impression that this is so of their case—that any one who is not convinced of it by now is merely an obdurate bigot.

I very much doubt whether any of my readers are likely to be taken in by this ploy, but it is nonetheless salutary to look back to Thomas Jefferson and to recall that, far from having argued their case to the point of exhaustion,

the egalitarians have refused to discuss it at all, from the very beginning.

For reasons that are all too evident.

## SHELMERDINE BY MISS PRISCILLA LANGRIDGE CHAPTER VIII BLONDE GENIUS

We have possibly given our readers the impression that the VI Form of Granchester consisted entirely of what might be termed "hearties", with the sole exception of Cara Leonie. If we have done so, the time has come to correct that impression. Certainly, to the late-twentieth-century eye, the general impression given by the Form would have been one of uprightness and cleanliness, and of a fresh-faced innocence of a sort which very few television-soaked five-year-olds of its own era could display. Freud was dead and God was very much alive, and the practical results of these two facts were written on the youthful lineaments of every child at Granchester, just as the results of their contraries were inscribed upon the countenance of every child at a comprehensive school of the latter twentieth century.

These things, however, are of a general nature. They affect every one, regardless of individual temperament or belief. Once the eye has become accustomed to the striking similarities which characterise any epoch, it settles down to discern the equally striking differences.

At Granchester in those days, there were two great divisions within the girls of the upper form, mirroring similar divisions in the Universities and elsewhere. First there were the "hearties", who, from a late-20th-century perspective all the girls may have superficially resembled. These were hard-working, hard-playing, sporty girls whose mottos were *mens sana in corpore sano* and "Play up, play up and play the game" and all that sort of thing. Quite unselfconsciously so; for the time when such ideas had been a deliberate, almost mannered, reaction against the Elizabethan ethos was already passing, and the nuance was lost on the young. Cleanliness and Godliness were being regarded with increasing seriousness by a generation which was acutely aware of dangers both to the body and to the soul.

In contradistinction to the "hearties" stood the "arties". The "arties" were born—like, as they themselves might have said, Aphrodite



from the foam—of the new wave of æstheticism which had broken upon the intellectual life of the era. Theirs were the cults of sensibility and of deliberate affectation. To be moved to tears by a humble flower, or to see in a child inexpressible depths of beauty and innocence of which others were oblivious because they went through life with their eyes closed to the celestial splendour that lay all about them: these were their aspirations; and if one had not the desired sensibility to the fullest degree, why, then one must dissemble it a little, for nothing could be duller than to be *natural*.

While the “hearties” were simple, the “arties” were complex. “Heartiness” was a straightforward rejection of the looseness, vice and anarchy of the Elizabethans. “Artiness”, many suspected (we are speaking here more of the Universities and the grown-up world in general than of Granchester), was something of a back-door return to the slipperiness and self-indulgence of that age. It was easy to take that view, but quite erroneous. The new æstheticism was in many respects an even deeper rejection of Elizabethanism than the new “Puritanism”. It rejected the cults of “spontaneity”, “naturalness” and “sincerity” which had been so important to the last century. It rejected the utilitarianism and the belief in comfort and convenience; it rejected the overriding belief in work and in economics, in progress and in democracy, in the pursuit of a highly-refined sensibility which had existed among the finest souls of all times, but least of all in the 18th and 20th centuries.

Some æsthetes were mystics and some were metaphysicists; some were almost ascetic in their dedication only to the highest and most refined, and some were mere sensationalists; some were highly moral and some were decidedly amoral—but even the amoral ones were amoral in quite a different way from that of the late 20th century, and with a tone which was the very antithesis of the liberal, plebeian amorality of that era.

The truth, of course, was that the two tendencies were complementary. No age speaks with a single voice. The deuterio-Elizabethans were both anarchic and regimented: both lascivious and Puritan; both idle and work-obsessed; both garish and drab. The “hearties”, and the generally revived spirit of the Bulldog Breed which affected the greater part of the nation in all classes, represented the antithesis of one side of the Elizabethan dichotomy, while the New Æsthetes represented the antithesis of the other. At the same time, just as the two sides of the old “modernism”

were closely related, even when they opposed one another, so the new Æsthetes and the new John Bulls, were joined by a common 21st-century *aisance*, and, indeed, the more advanced forms of each movement were perceived to have something in common, just as the most grimly Puritanical, grey-uniformed Maoist and the most self-indulgent, drug-sodden “hippie” were once seen both to represent the extreme *avant-garde* of the 20th century.

There was a further twist to the controversy in a school like Granchester, for many of the “arties” were also neo-feminists. “Feminism” in the 2020s was to mean something very different from what it had meant in the 1990s, and already the new ideas were abroad. It meant, in essence an adherence to “feminine values”, a belief that women are quite different from men and cannot and must not be treated like them or behave like them. In its milder form, it held that masculine and feminine values are complementary; at its extreme edge it argued for the superiority of feminine values. Somewhere in the middle, it welcomed the new æstheticism as a return of feminine values to society as a whole; but in practical terms, and at Granchester, it meant that a minority of the VI Form regarded the dedication to vigorous sports and frank, rugged behaviour as a *passé* and unpleasant throwback to the Elizabethan cult of female masculinity. In consequence, this minority made a point of being as feminine and languorous as possible and of avoiding, as far as possible, every sort of physical exertion other than flower-gathering.

Altogether, it is a moot point which of the two types of Granchester VI-Former would have been most embarrassing to a Granchester VI-Former of the Elizabethan period; and it is a moot point which of the two would have found a VI-Former of the Elizabethan period most embarrassing.

The “hearties” we have met, if briefly. The “arties” must now be introduced. Jane Love was the leader of the “hearties” (though not the heartiest) and also head girl of the school, for the “hearties” were very much the Ruling Party at that time. The leader of the “arties” was a girl known as Esmeralda FitzWilliam. I say “known as” advisedly, for the school authorities denied her the appellation “Esmeralda”, insisting upon the Anne with which she was christened, and even denied her, in official documents, the capital “W” in the middle of her surname. Esmeralda was a tall, willowy child who looked as though she had outgrown her bodily strength. She wore her hair in plaits, either wound about her head or hanging

looped beside her cheeks. She was not beautiful, or even pretty, but she had dark, haunting eyes which drew all one’s attention away from her objective appearance and into her own, soulful *miroir*. She read poetry with genuine appreciation; the 19th-century Romantics and the new Æsthetics. She shone in English, was always in the top three in History, and was a complete failure at virtually everything else; partly through genuine lack of aptitude and partly through utter lack of application. She had raised the standards of the English class above those of any previous VI-Form, because her circle spent hours voluntarily discussing and reading aloud from great poems and novels for much of the time when they were not engaged in schoolwork. That was one of the things which the “hearties” most disliked about them. It was quite impossible for any ordinary, hard-working all-rounder to get a decent place in the English listings.

Those who disliked Esmeralda found her exasperating, boring, and screech-makingly affected. Those who liked her found her fascinating almost beyond description: not only was she bewitching in and of herself, but she was constantly opening new worlds for her disciples: new literary adventures, new games, new appreciations of things they had seen without seeing a thousand times before. She was generous; no one could deny her that. She wanted her friends to live more fully, to achieve the best that they were capable of, to see and feel and speak and create. She had no great desire to be the single luminary of a passive and adoring circle, and although, to a great extent, that was what she was, she spared no pains in helping her followers up to her own level.

The “arties” were almost as prone to fads and crazes as the III Form. Sometimes, like those of the III Form, they came and went, lasting a few weeks or half a term. More often, each one took its permanent place in the panoply of Granchester Æstheticism and went thereafter through cycles or undulations of relative importance. One of these was the appreciation of the younger girls. The Revival of Childhood was one of the great features of the present era. For most people the child was a symbol of renewal; an opportunity to put right the corruption of the past by giving the new generation a real, decent childhood. To Æsthetics everywhere, the child was a deep well of innocence and mystery, polluted during the Elizabethan era, but always there in its other-worldly beauty and profundity. At Granchester this sensibility centred around the renewal of fagging. Curiously, fagging belonged

very much to the “hearty” outlook on life. The strengthening of hierarchy; the teaching of duty to younger girls and responsibility to older ones; the formation of character—these were the guiding ideas behind it. To the æsthetes, while they accepted these things (for it would be quite wrong to think of them as possessing the Standardised 20th-century “rebel” mentality) fagging meant something else; something deeper. For one thing it gave one an opportunity to study the Child at close quarters; to appreciate her innocence and closeness to the Archetypal. For another, the relation of servitude was fascinating in itself. The children were mediæval pages, they were classical slave-girls, they were one’s own children, bound in filial obedience and jealously protected from the Philistine school-at-large. And if, as they occasionally did, they understood the game themselves, they could join in a fascinating dance of the sensibilities, being at once nurtured and enslaved; made to laugh or cry at whim.

Many of the younger girls were a bit of a disappointment. They did not seem all that fascinatingly innocent (mostly because their mentors were too close to them both in age and era: an adult or a 20th-century child would have found them remarkably innocent). They were dull and matter-of-fact. They were preoccupied with tuck and with their own juvenile games.

“I don’t see how *any one* could find depths of innocence in Molly Sudbury,” confided Iffy Langham to Sarah Jones one day. “She is just a grubby, silly little urchin.”

“Oh, but you have not looked deeply enough,” replied Sarah.

Looking deeply could be an uphill struggle at times, but there were some juniors who really made the thing worthwhile; who entered fully into the spirit of the thing, having a natural true-childlikeness, or perhaps just a natural sense of theatre, or both. Esmeralda would welcome both, and would pounce upon my phrase “*just* a natural sense of theatre” with scorn. How boringly *Elizabethan* to disparage the thespian side of life. How positively archaic not to realise that many natural realities must be *acted* in order fully to be realised in this fallen world;—how outdated to cling to the naïve old myths of sincerity and spontaneity. “If we seek to strip away the masks of the world, we only find other masks which are less charming. That is the lesson of the 20th century. The petals of a flower are but the mask upon the mechanics of nature; but the mask is the *point* of the thing. The mech-

chanics are only there to sustain the mask." This was a typical Esmeralda-ism; so you see that she was something of a prodigy, and also that she was well-versed in Troubridge, Carman and Clorash.

Some girls, as I was saying, entered naturally into the rôle of mystical-child-cum-slave-girl, or whatever it may be; and of these, one excelled all others as the sun outshines the daytime moon. Her name was Lydia l'Ange. She was in the first form and small for her age; thus looking a true child. She had the most wonderful pale, spun-gold hair, which reached to her waist and beyond, so that when she joined her hands before her in demure submission (which she did often) she seemed to be surrounded by a shining mantle of white gold, which was at once a halo, a celestial robe and a radiant aura of light. Often, she spoke only a little English; carefully stumbling out her few words and turning upon her mistresses the dumb eloquence of her wonderful eyes. Her broken English, her charming gallicisms and her frequent difficulty in understanding her instructions added greatly to her charm.

Some of the above paragraph should be qualified a little. Her appearance was just as I have described it. In fact, my description can only begin to convey the quality of her appearance. Lydia l'Ange, though, was only sometimes her name. What vulgar people would insist upon calling her "real name" was Jane Marston. And she was not exactly French, though she had been studying the subject for three years, and knew enough of it to construct her broken-English sentences in a French-sounding fashion and she had once come fifth in the French class-list, though she was usually in the bottom half. English, on the other hand, she excelled at, doing almost as well as Esmeralda herself had at her age.

"But ah truly am forgetting ze English tongue when I am serving you, my honoured ones."

"Of course you are, my sweet one. It is all part of the magic." "The magic" was an important term in Esmeralda's vocabulary.

Lydia, of course, was Esmeralda's fag. She had originally belonged to Veronica Carlisle, who had terrified her, but Esmeralda had managed to come to an understanding with Veronica and arrange a "swap" for her own fag—a rather sluggish, desultory child whom Veronica saw as a challenge and soon made into a model fag. As a matter of fact, and contrary to many people's expectations, including yours, dear reader, Esmeralda and Veronica often came to understandings on things; for Veronica was by no means a thoroughgoing

"hearty"; she was a surprisingly subtle creature who appreciated aspects of both outlooks and had a neatly-shod foot in both camps.

Lydia liked to tell of her terror at the hands of Veronica, and of her rescue by Esmeralda. To her, Veronica was a wild Arab tribesman and Esmeralda a princess who had bought her. Sometimes Esmeralda toyed with the idea of selling her back, and she would implore on her knees with real tears:—"Whip me, mistress, whip me until my ivory shoulders are covered in purple stripes, and I shall but love thee the more; but I beg of thee, do not sell me back." And it seemed unlikely that she would ever do so; for every one of sensibility knew that there were in the æsthetic party two members of true genius: one was Esmeralda and the other was the first-form child Lydia l'Ange. Lydia's genius was less of the mind than of the sensibility. "Animal genius," one of Esmeralda's adherents had called it (the phrase is from Carman's *Rediscovery of the World* and is much more complimentary than it sounds). "Blonde genius," said another, quoting from *Angels in Babylon*. But genius it certainly was, as the world was later to discover, when Lydia l'Ange (not Jane Marston) became a household name. But that is quite another story. For the present, Lydia l'Ange was Esmeralda's bond-slave and thus court slave, pet and protégée to the Granchester Æsthetic Party.

I have referred to the Æsthetics as a Party, and I have spoken with literal truth, for party politics were a piece of Granchester tradition. From time out of mind there had always been two parties in the school: the Blues and the Greens,—formed, of course, upon the ancient Roman model. Possibly it had begun as a novel way of dividing the school and stimulating loyalties in the earliest days, when it was too small to have a full-scale house-system. Houses had later been introduced, but somehow the Greens and the Blues lived on. As they were unofficial, girls were not assigned a Party, but joined one at will; or rather, since the parties were always somewhat exclusive, supported one at will, and hoped eventually to be invited to join. When the houses were first introduced, the Parties were supposed to be abolished, and for a time the abolition was ineffectively enforced; but before long it became a Tradition, in days when Tradition in schools was sacred, and when girls' schools craved Traditions to make them more like the older boys' schools.

Sometimes the Parties had meant little if anything. They were just something to shout for at the annual Party Tennis Tournament and

an excuse for playing the odd jape on members of the opposing Party. At other times some real contention of principle had existed between the Parties, with more or less seriousness. Often, the blues had been associated with Conservative politics and the more traditional element in school life. During the late Elizabethan period, there had actually been a short-lived political movement called "the Greens", and because its ideas had been popular among many young people, the Granchester Greens had vaguely aligned themselves with them. Today, the Blues were the "hearties" and the Greens were the "arties". Esmeralda had wanted to change the party colour to violet, which was recognised as the colour of the new Æsthetics (just as yellow had been the colour of the late-Victorian Æsthetics); but tradition had been too strong for her, and many of the lower forms found it amusing to corrupt Esmeralda's name to "Emerald" in token of her Party.

There were no Party elections in the school—no elections, indeed, of any sort except for a brief period in the 1960s when the prefects and Head Girl had been elected—but there were a number of ways in which each Party tried to establish its supremacy over the other; having the Head Girl, Games Captain or a majority of prefects in one's Party was one way—and the Blues had all of these. This did not count for much with the current Green leadership, who were disdainful of games and, on the whole, were not competing for prefectships, which they considered "too energetic" ("energy"—a dated Elizabethan vogue-word—had for æsthetics something of the connotation which "enthusiasm" had for the 18th century). Winning the Party Tennis Tournament was another, as was winning the newer, and therefore less prestigious, Party Fencing Tournament. The Greens did have some useful tennis players and tennis was the one game most of them liked, as being civilised and not "teamy". On fencing they were divided. Some considered female fencing Elizabethan, some thought the art elegant. Most æsthetics fenced in winter, if only to keep themselves off muddy pitches and out of what Esmeralda called "brawls over balls". They were in with a chance on the fencing. Democratic support was again a Blue monopoly. Esmeralda had a following at every level of the school, but it could never compete with the combined prestige of games, prefects, the Head Girl and the simpler appeal of John Bullism. But again, democratic support was something the present Greens disdained. There was one

criterion of Party victory which both sides respected completely. Possession of the Mascots.

The Mascots dated back to the earliest phase of the school's history, to the second or third generation of its age when one of the first "old girls" had presented to her Party, the Blues, a bronze Statuette of an Amazon spear-thrower which instantly became the sign and talisman of the Party. The Greens felt themselves discomfited, and the first act of the Head Girl (then a Green, and an heiress in a small way) upon leaving school was to procure an even finer bronze of an Amazon charioteer and present it to her own Party. This charioteer was unquestionably the more splendid of the talismans, although the spear-thrower was the more venerable, and the Blues, feeling themselves trumped, set in motion a successful dormitory raid to steal the charioteer. Within a short time the Greens contrived not only to restore their Mascot, but to capture the spear-thrower, and thus began the series of raids, counter-raids, subtle thefts and cunning hiding-places which constituted the continual strife between the Parties. At times each party had its own Mascot, at times each Party had the other's, but when one Party held both Mascots, it could not but be acknowledged the victor, and it was in this happy position that the Greens now found themselves.

The position was not of Esmeralda's making. She had inherited it, and it was vitally necessary that she should maintain it. Her method of concealing the charioteer was simple, and, as it seemed to her, consummately appropriate. She had given it into the charge of Lydia l'Ange, for Lydia herself was regarded by the present Greens as their true Mascot. The first-former used no great art in the concealment of the treasure over which she was made custodian. She simply kept it in her locker. This, however, was a very adequate defence, for the school lockers were well-constructed and fitted with strong and sophisticated locks, dating from the late 20th century when such precautions had been a necessity. Lydia kept the key to her locker on a cord about her neck which she wore underneath her clothes both day and night. If anything, her method might have been criticised as being a little too secure—a shade unsporting, perhaps, for there seemed to be no means by which the Blues could have a chance of capturing the prize, even if they had known where to look for it, short of a degree of violence to person or property which was quite unknown at Granchester. This consideration, however, did not trouble Lydia l'Ange unduly. The slave-girl

had been promised the most salutary of punishments should she fail of her charge, and there was considerable doubt in her mind as to what might really happen if such a circumstance should ever arise. It was unlike Esmeralda to let her words fall idly or to let her magic operate at the level of mere pretence. Indeed, Lydia would have been deeply dis-

appointed had she done so; at the same time she had no wish to put the matter to the test.

It was thus with a thrill of terror that she opened the locker one morning to find that the charioteer was not there. Nothing else had been disturbed; the door had been locked as usual and the key was about her neck as ever—but the charioteer was quite definitely gone.

### Architecture

## An Introduction to Architecture

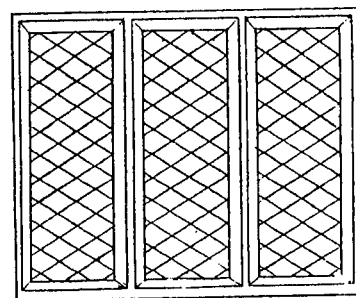
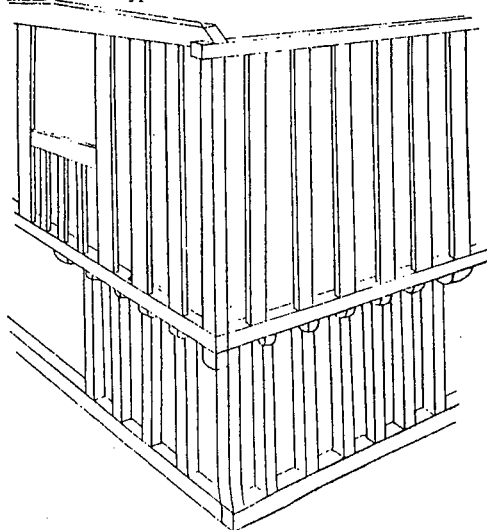
by Janus

*You have heard all these chaps talking about architecture, and no doubt some of you know all about it. But for those of us lacking in technical knowledge, we are pleased to present the following guide from our architectural correspondent.*

SEEING as its author is merely an interested amateur, the following attempt at defining some of the basic styles of architecture could be considered to be a little presumptuous. Therefore I feel bound to state that the following summaries, greatly simplified, are just one chap's brief, personal and highly opinionated view of the subject.

In the interests of brevity, these summaries shall begin with the Middle Ages, for, in the main, the only substantial buildings before then were ecclesiastical or defensive.

- A Typical Timber Framed Building -



- A Mullioned Window -

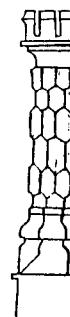
### The Mediæval Period

Much of the architecture built during this period was of timber construction. This means a skilled carpenter erected a strong timber frame, and then wattle and daub (essentially mud and oak sticks) was inserted into the panels to make solid walls. In later years these panels were often replaced by bricks. This method of construction continued, in revised form, well into the nineteenth century. Examples of 'half-timbering' vary between sublimely ornate manor houses, to simple 'vernacular' (locally designed and built) workmen's cottages, farmhouses and barns. Many of the larger dwellings had 'jettied' floors, where each successive upper floor protruded from the lower by a few feet.

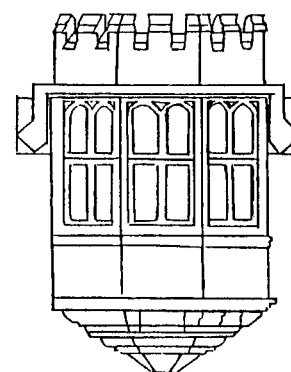
Stone, as a building material, was rather more the preserve of the aristocracy and the wealthy merchants, and was used in a simple but pleasing way. Stone 'mullioned' windows were popular, glazed with rectangular or diamond-shaped leaded lights.

### The Tudor Period

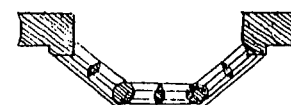
At this juncture, the craft of red brick making was revived for the first time since the Romans left the sceptred isle, and soon became very fashionable. There were many ornate stone embellishments applied to the grander houses, which were usually symmetrical, and built on a monumental scale. Tall brick chimneys pro-



- A Brick Chimney -



- An Oriel Window Elevation and Plan -



claimed wealth for all to see, as did Stone 'oriel' windows, which were like single 'bay' windows built on an upper floor.

### The Stuart Period

Classical architecture within England began at this point, following the appointment of Inigo Jones as Royal Surveyor in 1615. He introduced the rules, mathematical formulae and architecture of Palladio, an Italian who had died in 1580. Palladio had perfected the ancient Greek and Roman methods of design, based on the use of the five 'Classical Orders' of architecture. These are: Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and a mixture of Ionic with Corinthian called Composite.

Every part of the order is mathematically and proportionally related to the rest of the same order, thus it matters not how great or small the proposed building will be; every part, if one has done one's sums correctly, will be in proportion with the whole. Therefore all the true classical buildings always look correct.

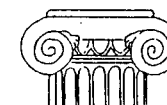
From this moment on, the fundamental components of proper architecture were developed; the box sash window, beautiful in its simplicity; the six-panelled door, perhaps the most pleasing in history; and the elegant and sometimes highly ornamented doorcase. Classical architecture never really died out; the Georgians, Victorians and Edwardians were very fond of it, and it enjoyed a revival in the 1930s. Even today, despite the best efforts of



- Doric Column -



Tuscan - top is without flutes and very plain -



Ionic - note the scrolls or 'volutes' on capital -



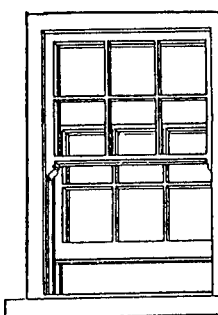
- Roman Corinthian -



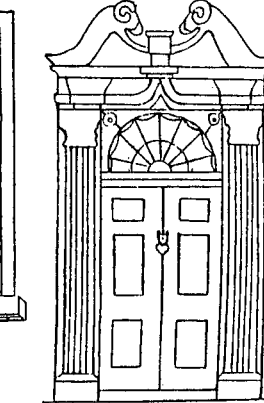
- Composite - a hybrid of Ionic and Corinthian -

modernist planners and architects, brand-new classical buildings are still constructed and are gaining in popularity among those who may be described as broadly civilised.

I have to confess to a bias (you may have noticed it!) in favour of classical architecture



- 12-Pane Sash Window -

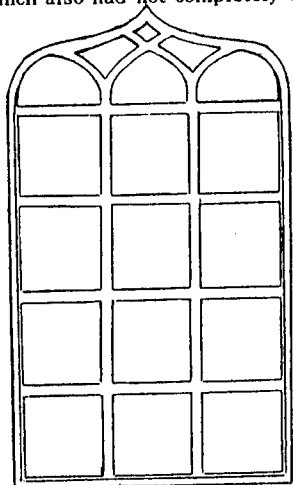


- Doorcase with Fanlight and 6-Panel Door -

over most other styles. However, I did warn you that this was a personal view! It does seem such a pity that, having spent hundreds of years developing and perfecting architecture handed down to us by the ancients, the discipline was all but destroyed within the first fifty years of this disgraceful century.

### The Georgian Period

Classical architecture achieved new heights and spread all over Great Britain at an ever increasing rate. However, Gothic architecture, an old English style mainly employed in churches, which also had not completely died out,



— *Georgian Gothic Revival Window* —  
enjoyed a revival in domestic architecture as an alternative to the strict discipline of classical design.

Arched windows soon appeared on buildings, in addition to castellations (battlements) and octagonal turrets and towers. The majority of Georgian buildings, however, continued in the classical vein, from the vast 'Palladian' Stone palaces, with columns and statuary, to elementary but very pleasing brick structures with sash windows, panelled doors, fanlights and some simple stonework. Symmetry and classicism were very much the order of the day.

### The Victorian Period

It is often claimed that the Victorians had no architectural style of their own. Certainly, virtually all architectural design during Queen Victoria's long reign was directly copied from past styles, not just from the realm but from around the world. The difference is that they

were not afraid to mix a number of different styles within one structure, and thus the resultant structure, if not displaying good taste or pedigree, was very interesting, impressive and often rather amusing!

The Victorians did not believe in rejecting any style that had been tried and tested in the past, and often greatly expanded on, and re-interpreted, architectural disciplines that had gone before. Their technical achievements were remarkable in building iron bridges, railway stations and huge factories and warehouses.

Classical architecture on a scale never before seen was popular for public buildings, highly decorated Italianate was used greatly for commercial buildings, theatres and libraries, while Gothic became practically the only style in which to design churches.

I would suggest that most people would be able to recognise a Victorian building, therefore that perhaps proves the case that our nineteenth century forbears *did* possess their own style—even if it is not to every one's taste.

### The Edwardian Period

This short era saw the continuation and development of two particular styles that began at the end of the nineteenth century. The Arts and Crafts style, led by William Morris and others, was an attempt to reject the ornamentalism of almost every aspect of Victorian life, and return to simple, hand-made goods, clothes and architecture of quality, with a strong emphasis upon the rustic.

Its contemporary opponent was Art Nouveau, a truly revolutionary style which was very ornamental, but in a completely new and very exaggerated fashion. Art Nouveau is very difficult to describe briefly on paper, but for example, stylised flowers and plants, especially tulips, were often used in decoration, as well as tall, languid ladies in long flowing robes. It was one of the casualties of the Great War and O! would that the same fate had befallen the International style after the second great conflict.

### The 1920s Onwards (Modernism)

Modernism, also known as the International style, is difficult to define, but I am sure that everyone knows what is meant by the dreadful term. I refuse to refer to it as architecture, as one definition of that word is; 'the art of designing and building according to rules and proportions regulated by nature and taste'.

Modernism, in its total rejection of all that has been learnt from the past, hardly deserves the title. It ranges from the stupefyingly

### Correspondence

## Undermining the Mind

MADAM, Further to the comments in your last leader upon the *inherent* evil of pop "music", your readers may be interested to learn that there are certain types of rock "music" which, when played backwards, create a cacophony scarcely distinguishable from that which they emit when played forwards, but within which the words "Worship Satan" can be clearly distinguished. This may be a "subliminal" message deliberately implanted in the music, just as subliminal pictures of the Socialist leader were superimposed "invisibly" over other programmes by French State-run television some 2,949 times during a recent election campaign, as was admitted in a court of law (the Socialists surprised many people by winning the election). Subliminal mind-altering by the "mass media" is far more wide-spread than most people realise.

Another possibility, even more sinister, is that the diabolical messages are *not* deliberate but emanate somehow from the diabolical nature of the music itself. This may seem, on the face of it, an absurd suggestion, but there is a scientific experiment which may have some bearing on this. In India the *shree yantra* is considered the holiest and most perfect of *yantras*. It is a highly complex geometric form constructed of interlocking triangles. The syllable "Om" (*aum*) is considered likewise to be the most sacred and perfect of *mantras*. There is a computerised device which can take sound-waves and interpret them as patterns on a screen. When a trained Brahmin priest pronounces the *Om* in exactly the correct traditional way into this machine, the screen shows a perfect representation of the *shree yantra*. Is it not possible that something akin to a dark inversion of this phenomenon might take place? Sounds, words and symbols are deeper things than we know in this crude materialistic culture. They are profoundly connected with the spiritual realities that underlie the universe and are mirrored in the human soul. Quite what is pop "music" and television doing to the soul? No one knows for sure.

YR. OBT. SERV. MRS. T. MITCHELL

Miss Prism agrees that the border between the psychological and the psychical is often thinner than we know. She also suggests that deliberate subliminal material may be a relatively small problem in comparison with that which may be called half-deliberate. It is now standard practice to bombard an audience with images of a high emotional or suggestive content at such speeds

bland—white-painted cubes and rhomboids—to the plain ridiculous, and results from a generation of irresponsible, anarchic "architects", intent on imposing on the rest of us that which they think we should appreciate. It has no tradition, no pedigree, and is thus illegitimate and simply not worth scrutiny.

The original intention of Modernism was almost sinister. The hope was to destroy virtually all old and historical buildings, especially in cities, and replace them with concrete boredom the world over. The desired effect, it seems, was to have one international architectural style, so that by looking around at the surrounding buildings, one would have no idea which country, let alone which city, one was in. This wholly despicable plan has been quite successful, as we are all only too aware.

### The 1980s Onwards (Post-Modernism)

Modernism is all but dead, thoroughly discredited after wreaking havoc all around the world for over half a century. The optimists among us are all looking forward to a gradual revival of proper architecture. However, it seems we must first endure a transitional period, while the Royal Institute of British Architects and their followers gradually begin to see reason. The by-product is Post-Modernism, a curious thing indeed.

If one happened to see a modernist building, but constructed perhaps of red brick instead of concrete, with diverse architectural details from the past stuck on, almost as an afterthought, and usually quite out of proportion, one would probably be gazing at a post-modernist building.

This "style" is generally to be avoided, for it cheapens the architecture of the past, and often attempts to poke fun at it. A slight improvement on modernism, although no one could do worse than modernism could he?

*So long as Bacon sat on the bench, the English language had a friend and an avenger. [He] had a most expressive countenance, but the feeling it expressed best was disgust, and never did it express disgust better than when any one pleading before him had been beguiled into a vulgarity. On one occasion one of his pleaders had used the expression "on the carpet". Bacon looked unutterable things, and the counsel, trembling for his costs, hastily said, "I see your lordship does not like the expression; I will withdraw it." "But you can't," groaned Bacon. "You can't. You might perhaps roll it up." To "finance" a company or to "exploit" anything whatsoever were dangerous undertakings in Bacon's court. AUSTIN BIRRELL*

that the mind, while being conscious of them, has not time to assess or criticise. Even the use of violent colours, discordant type-styles and clashing shapes helps to promote the neurotic, hypertrophic, disjointed mentality of the modern world. Such techniques may perhaps be termed sub-subliminal, and their purpose, subtler than that of real subliminals, is to inculcate not so much an explicit message as a state of mind. This is not, we would add, to postulate a conspiracy, or even necessarily a conscious policy. It is merely a question of the most advanced victims of the disease of modernism propagating their own disrupted state of consciousness. And speaking of "propagating"...

### The Propagators

MADAM, I note that your contributors use, from time to time, the terms "mass-media", or even "media". That they use them with distaste is clear, and only when such jargon seems awkward to avoid. Nonetheless, I would suggest that this nomenclature is not merely vulgar, but positively tendentious. "Media" is not merely a jargon-term, it is a propaganda-term; an Orwellian euphemism. It is deliberately intended to suggest that the sources in question are mere neutral "media" which facilitate free communication. They are nothing of the sort. They are rigorously-controlled and centralised organs in the hands of Government and big business, to which most people have no access whatever except upon terms laid down by the controllers. Certain points of view, quite widely held, are never allowed to be heard. National and International affairs are presented only from the liberal point of view and, more subtly but more pervasively, the entire modern outlook upon life is inculcated in every word and image; nothing which might seriously disturb it is ever admitted. The historically-eccentric, anti-traditional view of modernism is in complete control. Just look at the draconian measures by which access to the airwaves is restricted, even though there are hundreds of unused wireless frequencies. Why is this? Because free wireless might allow unauthorised persons with an unauthorised outlook to reach a large audience when all other channels are blocked by the monopolistic distribution networks.

The modern press and broadcasting services are not "media", except in the sense of "means" for the achievement of certain ends.

I have seen, in your publications and elsewhere the occasional use of the term "propagators" instead of "media", or sometimes "propagation media". This is much more satisfact-

ory. Instead of fostering the illusion that they are free media of communication, it indicates the truth—that they are organs for the propagation of a particular, limited view of the world; and if the word carries undertones of "propaganda", so much the better, for so—to say the very least—do the propagators themselves.

YR. SERVt. M. C. LENOIR

We are normally somewhat chary of using special terminology which may seem obscure or idiosyncratic. But "propagators" is hardly more odd than "media" itself and should, in my view, be considered.

### Modern Type-Setting

MADAM, Miss Locket was absolutely correct in her remarks about books. One cannot read decent books in modern editions, except as a very last resort. It is hard to explain to insensitive or modernised people, but every one with an ounce of sensitivity knows it. But what do they do to modern books? Is it some subtle touch-poison, or is it that the modernness of the publishers just oozes into the pores of the paper? I do not know and I do not suppose you do either, but what I do know is that even with the cheapest batteredest '30s Popular Edition with rough paper and coarse-grained binding one feels at home, one feels that one is reading a real book; whereas with the best modern facsimile in the world one knows that one is reading a dreadful modern simulacrum of a book, that is laughing a diabolical laugh somewhere deep down in its glue. Books, like motor-cars, have personality, and modern ones have dreadful modern personalities. Modern typesetting is almost as bad as modern types.

YR. OBt. SERVt. MISS P. M. LANGRIDGE

### Lines Written At Dusk After A Stormy Day

by Louis Glendusa

Now that the day, a weary dancer dying,  
Has gathered up her skirts to drift off-stage;  
The childish wind has stopped its futile sighing,  
The foolish rain has stopped its barren rage,  
Where is the form too fine for day to hold,  
The secret, whispering smile that noon forgot?  
That night perhaps might bring, and Hope,

grown bold,  
To each "why should it?" cries "why should it not?"

The watchful trees like haughty ghosts, the sky  
So proud and full of dark asides that I  
Am sure some soft-winged temptress must appear  
And with a Queen's secure and velvet airs  
Will sprinkle sunshine on my dusky cares,  
This wintry act, this curtain of the year.